

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1-61. (Canceled).

62. (Original) A method by which a disk-based distributed data storage system is organized for protecting historical records of stored data entities, the method comprising:
 recording distinct states of an entity, corresponding to different moments of time, as separate entity versions coexisting within the distributed data storage system;
 associating time-intervals with entity versions, corresponding to the times during which each entity version was considered current;
 sharing a set of rules for retaining entity versions among a plurality of storage sites; and
 designating some entity versions as deletable and some as undeletable independently at each of the plurality of storage sites.

63. (Original) The method of claim 62 in which, except for deletion, entity versions are immutable.

64. (Original) The method of claim 62 in which expiration times are also assigned to some entity versions, independently within each of the plurality of storage sites, according to a shared set of rules, before which times deletion is prohibited.

65. (Original) The method of claim 62 in which no single individual is given the authority to override the deletion prohibition at all of the plurality of storage sites.

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66-163. (Canceled).